

Beseler Cadet II Enlarger

Introducing the New Entry-Level Darkroom

by Jack and Sue Drafaahl

PHOTOGRAPHIC'S USER REPORT

Many of us who started in photography before the beginning of rapid-process papers may have forgotten the joys of our first darkroom setup. Think back a moment: Each test took 2-5 minutes, printing was a tedious process, and when we finally had a final print, wash times seemed to be endless. Chemicals took hours to dissolve, and enlargers, at the lower end, produced less than we envisioned; yet we still continued to print and take pictures.

Today, photographers starting entry-level darkrooms have everything going for them—high-speed papers, quality lenses, and better overall technology. With all these improvements, we have noticed a resurgence of photographers starting their own black-and-white darkrooms. Because of this increased interest, the Charles Beseler company has put together a beginning darkroom package that makes darkroom life a snap.

CADET II 35MM ENLARGER

The Beseler Cadet II is a small 35mm enlarger designed to fit in the smallest of darkrooms. Weighing in at about eight pounds and standing only two feet high, the Cadet II is very portable and easy to set up. Its basic features include a 12×14-inch base which supports a single, square 23-inch support column. A spring-steel coil is attached to the back of the column and counterbalances the enlarger head so that it is effectively weightless as you move it up and down the column. A large, knurled knob located on the back, right side of the enlarger head releases the head for easy movement, and then locks it in place when you have selected the proper height. At this point, you can focus the image with a second, smaller knurled knob on the right side of the head.

A 50mm f/3.5 enlarging lens is attached to the focusing bellows at the base of the enlarger head. The lens has click stops down to f/16, allowing control over exposure and print sharpness.

The negative carrier comes in two



Shown are the Beseler Cadet II enlarger and the Cadet Custom Printing Kit. The kit includes borderless easel, tongs, trays, thermometer, storage bottles, battery-operated timer, Agfa paper and chemicals, and a printing booklet.

pieces that hinge together once the negative has been placed under the four hold-down pins in the base of the carrier. The bottom half of the carrier crops in on the negative slightly, so that no clear areas are exposed on the paper. The carrier and negative lock into place as soon as they are placed in the enlarger. To remove, you simply raise the front of the carrier and slide it and the negative out.

The filter drawer is located above the negative carrier and is designed to take 3×3-inch contrast or color filters. Above that is a single glass condenser that focuses the light from the single bulb in the light chamber. A small vent

is located at the top of the lighting chamber, to vent the heat from the enlarger bulb away from the negative.

CADET CUSTOM PRINTING KIT

To ensure a good start in the darkroom, Beseler has included a custom photo printing kit and step-by-step instruction book. The kit includes a battery-operated enlarging timer, with a liquid-crystal display for easy viewing. To set the timer, you first press both minute and second buttons to clear the timer, then enter the enlarging time with the second button. When you are ready to make an exposure, press the start button on the timer and turn the light switch on the enlarger.

The borderless 8×10 easel has ridges on two sides to register the paper, and markings on the black base to indicate where the edge of 8×10, 5×7, and 4×5 printing images would be. The easel is made of heavy metal so

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Cadet II Darkroom kit.

that it doesn't move too easily, and allows the use of magnets to hold down the edge of the paper if necessary. A small, red safelight that fits into a normal light-bulb socket is also included, so you can see the paper as you expose and develop the print.

A bottle each of Agfa paper developer and fixer concentrates are also included, with which you can mix 32 ounces of each solution. In order to get you printing as soon as possible, a ten-sheet package of 8×10 Agfa paper is packaged with the darkroom kit. You can cut up one or two sheets for tests, and use the rest for final prints.

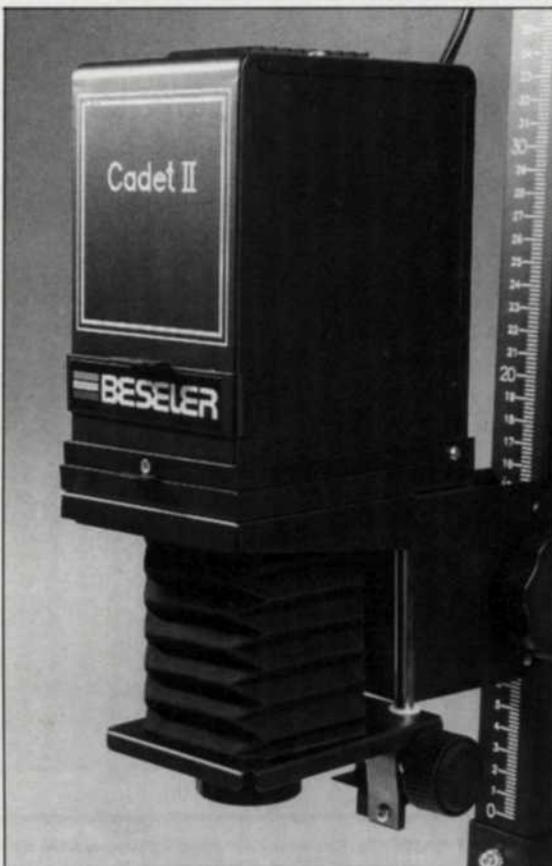
The three print tongs and three 8×10 print trays in the kit allow you to set up developer, fix, and wash solutions for making your prints. Other necessary darkroom accessories include a thermometer for measuring chemical temperatures, a graduate for measuring chemicals, bottles, and a funnel to pour the chemicals into the bottles. A 7½-inch-wide print squeegee is also provided to remove the excess water from the print after washing, thereby allowing much faster print-drying times.

MAKING YOUR FIRST PRINT

A small printing guide in the kit explains how to load the negative into the



Cadet II lens and bellows.



Cadet II head, bellows, and lens.

enlarger, make a test strip, process the paper, evaluate the test strip, and make a final print. Once you have become an expert with the Cadet II, the booklet then further explains contrast control, cropping, and burning and dodging.

If you desire further instruction, a discount coupon is enclosed for eight different videotapes on "The Darkroom," by Brooks Institute of Photography graduate Brian Ratty. These tapes cover subjects such as darkroom layout, chemicals, paper, proofing, making enlargements, and advanced black-and-white printing, as well as color films and color printing.

CONCLUSION

We find the Beseler Cadet II enlarger system to be excellent for someone setting up his or her first darkroom. The inclusion of the printing kit and darkroom instruction book make it an ideal gift or purchase for photographers who want to experience the excitement of watching their images develop before their eyes.

You can find the Beseler Cadet II Enlarger in your local camera store. It lists for \$171.75. The Cadet II Custom Printing Kit lists for \$83.50. For further information, contact The Charles Beseler Company, 1600 Lower Rd., Linden, NJ 07036-6514; telephone (908) 862-7999. ■